1: Herskovits E-4,5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais

796 535 men and women exchange gossip and sit about, joining in the songs or merely observing the proceedings; while the young people form part of the singing, dancing circle that revolves almost without pause about the central post of the *tonnelle*, the shelter where the festivities are held.

796 To speak of discipline in connection with these dances is to evoke new and astonishing images for readers familiar with the more popular literature on Haiti. It is admittedly true that as one first witnesses a *vodun* dance, one's reaction is that this is a performance governed solely by the dictates of individual possession. These ceremonies are usually held at night, deep in the bush, lighted only by a small, smoking oil lamp and by the candles fastened to the pegs of the drums, while the participants dress in anything but their best clothing, and in their belts the men carry the machetes always worn by the Haitian peasant. Add to this the effect of the unceasing rhythms of the drumming, the blanket of sound from the unison singing of the participants, the violence of the possessions, and it is not strange that the untrained observer tends to assess what he sees in almost any terms but those of the underlying discipline that defines all activity in the worship of the gods. A release of psychic tension is undoubtedly afforded those who become possessed, and this is also experienced to a lesser degree by all those in attendance. Nevertheless, it must be emphasized, despite so much that has been written to the contrary, that this form of worship of the *loa* is neither unrestrained hysteria nor drunken orgiastic satisfaction of the sex drive. The behavior of the participants, in terms of the accepted patterns of European and American religious decorum, often seems uncouth, vigorous, violent, and even dangerous, when it is merely the expression of a different tradition. And as for the orgiastic aspects of these rites, Haitians have ample opportunity to satisfy their sexual impulses elsewhere, without making this a basic and constant element in the worship of their gods.

996 *Vodun* dances, in Mirebalais as elsewhere, take place on

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3
[P 112-M]

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19. *Vodoun altar of the houngfor "Caille Aguet" in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. On the wall behind the altar are names of favored lwa. On the altar are jars containing lwa and souls of dead persons. Painted on its front wall, against which swords and flags are leaning, is the ship of Lwa Aguet.*